

Custom House, Boston, Mass., April 19th/95

The writer of the within log, was a seaman on the American Ship, "Plough Boy". His father Henry Phelon Jr being master. The extract, is an exact copy of the log kept by the writer, and recounts his first experience with the Sperm Whale, March 4th 1849.

Sunday, March 4th 1849.

These 24 hours commenced with light winds, Southerly and Easterly trades. Some light squalls of rain, middle part more pleasant, heading to the NNE. At 9 Am the cry of "There she blows," was the pleasant sound from 'mact head, which proved to be 2 large schools of Sperm Whales, one school to the leeward, and one to the windward. Mr Folger and Mr Antoine went to the windward, Helped Brown, our boatsteerer get the line tub into our boat, we lowered, Mr Wood and Mr Sinclair going to the leeward, went most on to them once or twice, it became a little squally could not see ship or whales, cleared off in a few moments, the whales were well to the leeward, quite a strong breeze, we were gaining on them fast, when they went down, just before we got to them. They soon came up again, there were 10 of them in the school, heading towards the boat. Had to paddle to the windward, soon got behind them, Mr Sinclair was to the leeward of us, waiting for us to go on, when we got close on to them Mr Wood whispered to Brown, which is the largest? Charley said the middle one, with a will we went right in among them, and smack on to him. Brown put 2 irons into him, right under his hump, and the way they made the water fly with the lashing of their flukes, and our poor boat rolling and tumbling about in the foam. The time was short and they were gone, it is a wonder they did not strike the boat. The whale soon came up again, went on, and Mr Wood lanced him several times. The boat steerer said, "we have got an ugly customer". Mr Sinclair came up and

made fast. The whale kept going round in a circle spouting thin blood, we were in the centre, watching for a chance to go on. He came up to our boat several times, and tried to take it in his jaws, but did not succeed, went smack up on his back, and Mr Wood lanced him several times. The whale spouting thick blood. We were watching our chance to go on to him again, when he milled round, just before he got to us, he settled in the water, Mr Wood sang out, "Stern hard," "Stern hard," We were steering against a heavy sea, and did not make much stemway, when all at once, I felt the boat going over, and heard a crashing sound, I pulled the tub oar, I fell over backwards and came up underneath the boat. I was entangled in the line, cleared myself, dropped down and swam from under the boat. Oh! what a sight I beheld. I was not more than 5 feet from him. he had the bows of the boat in his jaws crushing it, and Mr Wood laying inside of his jaws. I was so frightened, I took hold of an oar, just as Brown called out, "Henry look out for that whales jaw," Swam away as fast as I could with my oar. The whale then milled round and came towards me. I looked around as I was swimming, and saw poor Brown close to his flukes, struggling to get out of his way. The whale threw him up on his flukes, and must have killed him, for he was lashing the water. Mr Sinclair was pulling to take me in his boat. One of the crew laid over the gunwale and reached the oar out to me to catch hold, Mr Sinclair sang out. "Henry catch hold of that oar and hold on. I cant wait. I caught hold the boat dragging me. The whale smashing Mr Sinclairs steering oar, I was but a few feet from his head when they pulled me in. I was too weak to help myself. Mr Folger and Mr Antoine had given up the whales to the windward, and came down to our help. Poor Mr Wood we picked him up, he was clinging to a piece of the boat, his arms thrown over it, he was groaning terribly, he could not have lasted many moments more. We got

him to the ship as quick as we could, he could not move when we got him alongside, he was terribly mangled, a large piece was torn from his side, his head was very badly bruised, besides his back and legs, am afraid he cannot live, his sufferings are terrible, Mr Folger and Mr Antoine finished the whale, we were all saved but poor Brown, got the whale alongside at sunset, made him fast, and commenced to get up tackles to cut him in, Lat $4^{\circ} 52'$ South,

Monday, March 5th 1849.

This day commenced with fine weather, commenced cutting in whale at 6 PM finished cutting in, we are heading to the S.W. Mr Woods wounds are very dangerous, am afraid he will not last many hours. Light S & E trades. Lat $6^{\circ} 15'$ South, so ends these 24 hours.

Tuesday, March 6th 1849

This day commenced with strong winds S & E. we are bound for the Society Islands to take Mr Wood, his wounds are about the same as yesterday am afraid he never will get over it, we are very busy trying out blubber, they think he will make 80 or 90 bbls of oil, so ends &c

Wednesday, March 7th 1849,

Fine weather, strong S & E winds, saw several sperm whales, Course S.W., under all canvas making for "Otaheiti" as fast as we can, we miss poor Brown from our little family, Lat $7^{\circ} 50'$ South, Longitude $108^{\circ} 53'$ West ^{S. 1/2 E.}

Thursday March 8th 1849

Commenced this day with strong S & E winds, Course S.W. finished boiling out about 10 am, Our whale will make over 80 bbls of oil, our Cooper Mr Taber sick Lat $9^{\circ} 34'$ South, Longitude $111^{\circ} 24'$ West so ends.

Friday, March 9th 1849

Commenced with fine weather, strong S & E winds, Course S.W. Mr Wood is a little more comfortable, though he looks very bad. Lat $11^{\circ} 20'$ South, Long $114^{\circ} 9'$ West
over

Sunday, March 11.th 1849,

Commenced this day with fine weather, light winds, under Crowded Sail, Still in the S.E. trades. Course W by S $\frac{1}{2}$ S, Mr Wood I am afraid will never get well, most all think his wounds will mortify. going to Otakeita as fast as we can, to get a doctor, he is as comfortable as can be expected, but almost entirely helpless, three men employed to take care of him, Lat $11^{\circ} 58'$ South, Long $118^{\circ} 4'$ West,

Monday, March 12.th 1849,

Fine weather, light S.E. trades, Course W by S $\frac{1}{2}$ S, and W by S. Mr Wood is getting along more comfortable. Am glad, for we cannot part with him, all sail set, busy Coopersing. Lat 12° South So ends

Tuesday March 13.th 1849

Light S.E. trades, Course W by S $\frac{1}{2}$ S, After getting Mr Wood to Otakeita, we are going to get a mate and boatstewer, and several Kanakas, and go to sea on a Cruise, then go back and get Mr Wood, if able to come on board, Lat $12^{\circ} 21'$ South, $120^{\circ} 58'$ West Longitude, So ends.

Sunday March 18.th 1849

Fine weather, Course W by S, winds from the S.E. Mr Wood was on deck to day for the first time since he has been sick, he walked a little we were glad to see him up again, a sail was raised, it cheers all our hearts to see a sail, after such a disaster as we have had. Lat $12^{\circ} 35'$ South,

Sunday, April, 1.st 1849,

Strong breezes, and very rugged sea, Saw the island of Otakeita, at 11 Am, Lowered a boat, and pulled into the harbor with Mr Wood. at 7 Pm, returned on board, having left Mr Wood on shore, So ends &c.

Obituary

Inquirer and Minor Nantucket Mass January 3^d 1885

Capt Albert Wood a highly esteemed citizen and a worthy shipmate, died very suddenly about noon on Monday last at the age of 71 years. His career had been an adventurous one, all the prime of his life having been spent on the Ocean. He first went to sea in 1832 and rose rapidly to the highest rank, commanding the Ship "Gold Hunter" of Fall River as early as 1841. Some years later, while first officer in the Ship "Plough Boy" of New Bedford, his boat was stove by a Sperm Whale, and he was caught in the whales jaws, receiving severe wounds in the leg and abdomen, before he could escape. To the surprise of his shipmates, he recovered from these injuries, but the terrible scars remained to the day of his death. Afterwards the "Plough Boy" was wrecked on the Pacific Coast, and Capt Wood went to California, he commanded other vessels, sailing from San Francisco and afterwards having sold his vessel in Manila, he formed a connection with a mercantile house in Manila, until about 1867, when he came home to spend the remaining years of his life in comfort with his family. His pleasant face and genial manners were known to us all, and the announcement of his death gave shock to every one, as he had been down street apparently in his usual health during the forenoon. He leaves a widow, a daughter and two sons.

Addressed to
S. L. Treadwell.

Boston April 19th

Dear Sir,

This story is an exact copy of a log kept by me in 1849. I was then only 17 years old, and of course a land lubber in the business of a whaler, and keeper of the log. I have seen fit to give it to you in the same phraseology of my boyish mind. As to rewrite it in proper grammar and polished sentences, might detract from the interest of the log itself. Capt Hammer an intimate friend of your father, late Port Warden of this city, and one of the oldest shipmasters, told me in the presence of others, that there was not another case on record where a man was taken in a whales jaws and came out alive. You asked me a long time ago, if I would give you a copy of the log? Please excuse this long delay.

Sincerely and Truly Yours

Henry A. Phelon

Inspector of Customs

Boston April 19th /1895/

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